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April 1941

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
U. S. Agricultural Marketing Service

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CONTINUOUS FACTORY INSPECTION EXPERIMENT AND LABELING OF CANNED
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN TERMS OF U. S. STANDARDS

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Many questions are received by individuals actively participating in a study of consumer acceptance of U. S. grade labeled canned fruits and vegetables. An attempt has been made to answer briefly the more important of these questions.

1. Why is this study of consumer reaction to U. S. grade labeled canned foods being made?

This study has been undertaken:

To ascertain whether consumers prefer canned products conventionally labeled with brand names and information necessarily carried on labels as required by law or if, in addition, they desire more specific information as to the grade of the product.

To ascertain consumer reaction to continuous inspection by the Agricultural Marketing Service in canning plants.

2. What is meant by "continuous factory inspection" by the Agricultural Marketing Service of the United States Department of Agriculture?

"Continuous factory inspection" signifies that qualified Federal inspectors of the Agricultural Marketing Service of the United States Department of Agriculture are present in the canning plant at all times it is in operation, observing the preparation and packing of the canned food products.

3. How did the continuous factory inspection experiment come about?

It was suggested by canners and consumers.

4. How may consumers identify the foods packed in plants under continuous inspection?

These foods may be labeled in terms of U. S. grades, such as U. S. Grade A, U. S. Grade B, and U. S. Grade C, and may bear on the labels the legend "Packed Under the Continuous Inspection of the Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture."

5. When was the present continuous factory inspection experiment begun in plants canning fruits and vegetables?

Continuous factory inspection was conducted in one plant during the canning season of 1939. In 1940, continuous inspection was introduced in five other plants. Several additional concerns have requested the service for the 1941 canning season.

6. Why is the continuous factory inspection service spoken of as an "experiment"?

The Agricultural Marketing Service wishes to determine consumer and industry reaction to products packed under the continuous inspection program. The Agricultural Marketing Service is constantly seeking ways to assist in more satisfactorily marketing agricultural products for the benefit of consumers and producers. If a more wholesome regard for canned products on the part of the consumer is awakened by reason of such inspection, it is hoped a wider market will develop for canning crops. Hence, the Service is merely experimenting in a new field.

7. Why is the service being rendered only in a few plants?

Because of its experimental nature. Plants thus operating have been carefully selected, due consideration being given to the physical plant properties, excellence of plant equipment, the plant's location with reference to proximity to canning crops, and the willingness of the personnel to cooperate with the Service in improving their products. The Agricultural Marketing Service feels it can ascertain the value of such service by operating in but a few plants carefully chosen in various parts of the United States and packing a varied line of products.

8. Are there other points in relation to continuous factory inspection on which the Service, as an administrative agency, desires information?

Yes. Many. Among them are (1) cost of continuous factory inspection, (2) how personnel can be trained best for such work, (3) what type of personnel is most suitable for such work, (4) additional authentic information relative to proper commercial packing procedures, to enable the Service to improve existing Government standards for canned products.

9. Will continuous factory inspection be established on a permanent basis?

If it is found to be of demonstrated value to the industry and to the consumer, it may be.

10. What requirements have been met by plants participating in the experiment?

The plants have been thoroughly inspected to make sure that the sanitary conditions meet the rigid requirements of the Service. These requirements have to do with sanitation in the plant, adequate provisions for personal cleanliness of employees handling food, and proper observance of housekeeping policies.

11. Are inspectors on duty at all times in plants operating under continuous inspection?

Inspectors must be in the plant whenever the plant is in operation.

12. Are these Government inspectors employed under Civil Service regulations?

Yes.

13. Will the Agricultural Marketing Service grant continuous inspection service to any plant requesting it?

No. The continuous inspection service is an experiment at this time.

14. What plants now ~~have~~ continuous factory inspection by the Agricultural Marketing Service and what commodities do they pack?

Plants operating under the continuous factory inspection by the Agricultural Marketing Service and the commodities packed by each plant are:

Schuckl & Company, Inc., Sunnyvale, California.

Apricots, Royal Anne cherries, freestone and clingstone peaches, Bartlett pears, fruits for salad, fruit cocktail, and tomatoes.

United States Products Corp., Ltd., San Jose, California.

Apricots, Royal Anne cherries, freestone and clingstone peaches, Bartlett pears, fruits for salad, fruit cocktail, and tomatoes.

Cherry Growers, Inc., Traverse City, Michigan.

Red sour pitted cherries.

Curtice Brothers Co., Rochester, New York (Mt. Morris, N.Y., plant).

Cream-style and whole-grain corn and succotash.

Florida Fruit Cannery, Inc., Frostproof, Florida.

Grapefruit segments and grapefruit juice.

Wegner Canning Corporation, Eustis, Florida.

Grapefruit segments and grapefruit juice.

15. Who pays the expenses of continuous factory inspection?

Each cooperating canner pays a fee sufficient to cover the salaries of the inspectors plus 15% for the overhead expenses of the service. Fees are paid into the United States Treasury.

16. Will the prices of foods canned in factories under continuous inspection of the Agricultural Marketing Service be increased as a result of this service?

Prices currently quoted on these canned foods are in line with prices quoted on canned foods of corresponding quality packed in plants with-

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out this service. Conclusive data are not yet available, but there are indications that continuous factory inspection may result in reducing other expenses sufficiently to cover the cost of the service. In any event, it is believed that the cost to the canner will range from two to four ten thousandths of a cent per can of the size sold to consumers.

17. Who develops the standards for the different Government grades for canned fruits and vegetables.

Standards are developed by the Agricultural Marketing Service. Proposed tentative standards are approved only after they have been submitted for consideration to the industry and others interested.

18. What are the general requirements of U. S. Grade A canned fruits or vegetables?

U. S. Grade A are fine quality canned fruits and vegetables, carefully selected as to size, color, degree of maturity, and freedom from blemishes. The fruits are meaty, highly colored, and ripe. They are almost always packed in sirup, which may be extra-heavy (very sweet), heavy (sweet), light (somewhat sweet), or water slightly sweetened. For certain purposes the fruit may be packed in water. U. S. Grade A canned vegetables are very tender and succulent.

19. What are the general requirements of U. S. Grade B canned fruits or vegetables?

The products in U. S. Grade B are of very good quality, though not quite so well selected as to color, size, and maturity as U. S. Grade A products. Grade B canned fruits are well-developed and well-colored, and are packed in sirup or water as described for U. S. Grade A. U. S. Grade B canned vegetables are not quite so succulent and tender as those used for U. S. Grade A.

20. What are the general requirements of U. S. Grade C canned fruits or vegetables?

Products in U. S. Grade C are of good quality but are not so uniform in color, size, and maturity as U. S. Grade B products. U. S. Grade C canned fruit may not be so highly colored, or so carefully selected as to size and symmetry, and though mature may vary somewhat in ripeness. The fruit may be packed in sirup or water. U. S. Grade C vegetables in some cases may have more food value than either U. S. Grade A or B as they usually are more mature than the products in the higher grades.

21. Are any canned foods which are below U. S. Grade C in quality found in retail stores?

Yes. Some canned foods fail to meet the requirements of U. S. Grade C but are wholesome, nutritious, and acceptable in flavor. If a canned food, for which a minimum standard of quality has been promulgated under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, falls below this standard, the label on the container must indicate in what way the food fails to meet the minimum standard of quality.

22. Are all canned fruits and vegetables, which meet the requirements of U. S. Grade A, B, or C, as established by the Agricultural Marketing Service, good foods?

Yes, they are all wholesome, nutritious foods.

23. For what canned fruits and vegetables have grades been developed by the Agricultural Marketing Service?

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Grades</u>	<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Grades</u>
Apples-----	A C	Okra-----	A C
Apple juice-----	A C	Olives, ripe-----	A B C
Apple sauce-----	A C	Peaches, freestone-----	A B C
Apricots-----	A B C	Peaches, yellow clingstone--	A B C
Asparagus-----	A C	Pears-----	A B C
Beans, dry-----	A C	Peas-----	A B C
Beans, lima-----	A B C	Peas, black-eye-----	A C
Beans, snap-----	A B C	Pimientos-----	A C
Beets-----	A C	Plums-----	A B C
Blackberries-----	A B C	Potatoes, sweet-----	A C
Carrots-----	A C	Pumpkin-----	A C
Cherries, red sour pitted----	A C	Raspberries, red-----	A B C
Cherries, sweet-----	A C	Sauerkraut-----	A C
Corn, cream-style-----	A B C	Spinach-----	A C
Corn, whole-grain-----	A B C	Succotash-----	A B C
Figs, Kadota-----	A B	Tomatoes-----	A B C
Fruit cocktail-----	A B	Tomato catchup-----	A C
Grapefruit-----	A B	Tomato juice-----	A C
Grapefruit juice-----	A C	Tomato pulp-----	A C
Mushrooms-----	A C		

